



Court of Appeals of Indiana

The Court of Appeals of Indiana is the state's second-highest court. It hears appeals from Indiana trial courts, including small claims courts, and from administrative agency decisions. The court's 15 members hear cases in three-judge panels that rotate three times per year. Cases are never assigned to a single judge, and all cases are randomly assigned. The Court celebrated its centennial in 2001.

Court of Appeals Cases

- Because the Indiana Constitution provides “an absolute right to one appeal,” the Court of Appeals considers more than 2,000 cases per year.
- The court decides about twice as many criminal cases as civil cases each year.
- In 2013, the court affirmed trial court decisions in 86 percent of criminal appeals, 91 percent of post-conviction relief petitions, and 63 percent of civil appeals.
- A decision of the Court of Appeals of Indiana is final unless granted further review by the Indiana Supreme Court.
- Some opinions are “for publication” and can be cited as precedent for subsequent cases; others are marked “NFP” or “not for publication,” and may not be used in citing precedent. All opinions are available on the court’s website, www.courts.IN.gov/appeals.

Oral Arguments

- The court conducts oral arguments in its Statehouse courtroom but also at law schools, colleges, high schools and other venues. So-called *Appeals on Wheels* help Hoosiers learn more about the judiciary’s indispensable role in Indiana government.
- The court has conducted more than 385 *Appeals on Wheels* since its 2000-01 centennial.
- The court decides most cases without holding oral argument. In 2013, for example, the court issued 2,058 majority opinions and heard 71 oral arguments.
- Oral arguments are not trials or hearings. No witnesses, evidence or testimony are presented. Rather, attorneys for the parties present legal arguments to the court on behalf of their clients.
- Most Statehouse oral arguments are webcast live and archived at www.courts.IN.gov/appeals.

Court of Appeals Judges

- The court’s 15 judges are drawn from five geographic districts established by state law, but sit as one court.
- Appellate judges are selected by merit and stand for retention election during general elections.
- When a vacancy occurs, the governor appoints a successor from three names submitted by an independent, nonpartisan Judicial Nominating Commission.
- By law, the judges select a chief judge every three years. Current Chief Judge Nancy H. Vaidik assumed the post on Jan. 1, 2014.